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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Comanche Trail Pipeline, LLC

Docket No. CP15-503-000

Notice of Intent to Prepare an  
Environmental Assessment for the Proposed  
**San Elizario Crossing Project**  
Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that will discuss the environmental impacts of the San Elizario Crossing Project involving construction and operation of specific border crossing facilities for the export of natural gas by Comanche Trail Pipeline, LLC (Comanche Trail) in El Paso County, Texas. The Commission will use this EA in its decision-making process to determine whether the project is in the public interest.

This notice announces the opening of the scoping process the Commission will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies on the project. You can make a difference by providing us with your specific comments or concerns about the project. Your comments should focus on the potential environmental effects, reasonable alternatives, and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impacts. Your input will help the Commission staff determine what issues they need to evaluate in the EA. To ensure that your comments are timely and properly recorded, please send your comments so that the Commission receives them in Washington, DC on or before **September 2, 2015**.

If you sent comments on this project to the Commission **before** the opening of this docket on May 29, 2015, you will need to file those comments in Docket No. CP15-503-000 to ensure they are considered as part of this proceeding.

This notice is being sent to the Commission's current environmental mailing list for this project. State and local government representatives should notify their constituents of this proposed project and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

Comanche Trail provided landowners with a fact sheet prepared by the FERC entitled “An Interstate Natural Gas Facility On My Land? What Do I Need To Know?”. This fact sheet addresses a number of typically-asked questions, including the use of eminent domain and how to participate in the Commission's proceedings. It is also available for viewing on the FERC website ([www.ferc.gov](http://www.ferc.gov)).

### **Public Participation**

For your convenience, there are three methods you can use to submit your comments to the Commission. The Commission encourages electronic filing of comments and has expert staff available to assist you at (202) 502-8258 or [efiling@ferc.gov](mailto:efiling@ferc.gov). Please carefully follow these instructions so that your comments are properly recorded.

- 1) You can file your comments electronically using the [eComment](#) feature on the Commission's website ([www.ferc.gov](http://www.ferc.gov)) under the link to [Documents and Filings](#). This is an easy method for submitting brief, text-only comments on a project;
- 2) You can file your comments electronically by using the [eFiling](#) feature on the Commission's website ([www.ferc.gov](http://www.ferc.gov)) under the link to [Documents and Filings](#). With eFiling, you can provide comments in a variety of formats by attaching them as a file with your submission. New eFiling users must first create an account by clicking on “[eRegister](#).” If you are filing a comment on a particular project, please select “Comment on a Filing” as the filing type; or
- 3) You can file a paper copy of your comments by mailing them to the following address. Be sure to reference the project docket number (CP15-503-000) with your submission:

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street NE, Room 1A  
Washington, DC 20426

### **Summary of the Proposed Project**

Comanche Trail proposes to construct and operate a new border crossing at the international boundary between the United States and Mexico in El Paso County, Texas. The San Elizario Crossing Project would consist of the construction of approximately

1,086 feet of FERC-jurisdictional 42-inch-diameter pipeline, installed using a horizontal directional drill (HDD) beneath the Rio Grande River near the City of San Elizario in El Paso, Texas. The new pipeline would have a maximum design export capacity of approximately 1.1 billion cubic feet per day, in order to transport natural gas to a new delivery interconnect in the vicinity of the City of San Isidro, in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico.

The general location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.<sup>1</sup>

### **Non-jurisdictional Facilities**

The San Elizario Crossing Project has associated facilities that would be constructed in support of the project, but do not fall under the jurisdiction of the FERC. The proposed Comanche Trail intrastate pipeline facilities, consist of 196 miles of new 42-inch-diameter pipeline, multiple receipt and delivery metering stations, and other auxiliary facilities extending from Pecos County, Texas and terminating at the proposed FERC-jurisdictional project facilities in El Paso County. The intrastate facilities would be subject to the jurisdiction of the Texas Railroad Commission and would be non-jurisdictional to the FERC. In the EA, we will provide available descriptions of the non-jurisdictional facilities and include available environmental impact information under our analysis of cumulative impacts.

### **Land Requirements for Construction**

Construction of the San Elizario Crossing Project pipeline would affect a total of 4.2 acres of land in the United States, which includes temporary workspace for HDD construction, hydrostatic testing of the pipeline, and project access. Following construction, Comanche Trail would retain 1.3 acres as a 50-foot-wide permanent easement for operation of the FERC-jurisdictional pipeline, and the remaining acreage would be restored and revert to former uses.

### **The EA Process**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from an action whenever it considers the issuance of an Authorization. NEPA also requires us<sup>2</sup> to discover and address concerns the public may have about proposals. This process is referred to as

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<sup>2</sup> “We,” “us,” and “our” refer to the environmental staff of the Commission’s Office of Energy Projects.

“scoping.” The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the EA on the important environmental issues. By this notice, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues to address in the EA. We note that many comments were filed prior to this notice. We want to assure those commentors that their concerns will be considered in the scope of our environmental review; you do not need to resubmit comments. We will consider all filed comments during the preparation of the EA.

In the EA we will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the construction and operation of the proposed project under these general headings:

- geology and soils;
- land use;
- water resources, fisheries, and wetlands;
- cultural resources;
- vegetation and wildlife;
- air quality and noise;
- endangered and threatened species;
- public safety; and
- cumulative impacts.

We will also evaluate reasonable alternatives to the proposed project or portions of the project, and make recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas.

The EA will present our independent analysis of the issues. The EA will be available in the public record through eLibrary. **We will also publish and distribute the EA to the public for an allotted comment period.** We will consider all comments on the EA before making our recommendations to the Commission. To ensure we have the opportunity to consider and address your comments, please carefully follow the instructions in the Public Participation section beginning on page 2.

With this notice, we are asking agencies with jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise with respect to the environmental issues of this project to formally cooperate with us in the preparation of the EA.<sup>3</sup> Agencies that would like to request cooperating agency status should follow the instructions for filing comments provided under the Public Participation section of this notice.

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<sup>3</sup> The Council on Environmental Quality regulations addressing cooperating agency responsibilities are at Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1501.6.

## **Consultations Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act**

In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's implementing regulations for section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we are using this notice to initiate consultation with the applicable State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and to solicit their views and those of other government agencies, interested Indian tribes, and the public on the project's potential effects on historic properties.<sup>4</sup> We will define the project-specific Area of Potential Effects (APE) in consultation with the SHPO as the project develops. On natural gas facility projects, the APE at a minimum encompasses all areas subject to ground disturbance (examples include construction right-of-way, contractor/pipe storage yards, compressor stations, and access roads). Our EA for this project will document our findings on the impacts on historic properties and summarize the status of consultations under section 106.

### **Environmental Mailing List**

The environmental mailing list includes: federal, state, and local government representatives and agencies; elected officials; environmental and public interest groups; Native American Tribes; other interested parties; and local libraries and newspapers. This list also includes all affected landowners (as defined in the Commission's regulations) who are potential right-of-way grantors, whose property may be used temporarily for project purposes, or who own homes within certain distances of aboveground facilities, and anyone who submits comments on the project. We will update the environmental mailing list as the analysis proceeds to ensure that we send the information related to this environmental review to all individuals, organizations, and government entities interested in and/or potentially affected by the proposed project.

When we publish and distribute the EA, copies will be sent to the environmental mailing list for public review and comment. **If you would prefer to receive a paper copy of the document instead of the CD version or would like to remove your name from the mailing list, please return the attached Information Request (appendix 2).**

### **Becoming an Intervenor**

In addition to involvement in the EA scoping process, you may want to become an "intervenor" which is an official party to the Commission's proceeding. Intervenor play

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<sup>4</sup> The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations are at Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 800. Those regulations define historic properties as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

a more formal role in the process and are able to file briefs, appear at hearings, and be heard by the courts if they choose to appeal the Commission's final ruling. An intervenor formally participates in the proceeding by filing a request to intervene. Instructions for becoming an intervenor are available on the Commission's website at <http://www.ferc.gov/resources/guides/how-to/intervene.asp>.

### **Additional Information**

Additional information about the project is available from the Commission's Office of External Affairs, at **(866) 208-FERC**, or on the FERC website at [www.ferc.gov](http://www.ferc.gov) using the "eLibrary" link. Click on the eLibrary link, click on "General Search" and enter the docket number, excluding the last three digits in the Docket Number field (i.e., CP15-503). Be sure you have selected an appropriate date range. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at [FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov](mailto:FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov) or toll free at (866) 208-3676, or for TTY, contact (202) 502-8659. The eLibrary link also provides access to the texts of formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings.

In addition, the Commission now offers a free service called eSubscription which allows you to keep track of all formal issuances and submittals in specific dockets. This can reduce the amount of time you spend researching proceedings by automatically providing you with notification of these filings, document summaries, and direct links to the documents. Go to [www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/esubscription.asp](http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/esubscription.asp).

Finally, public meetings or site visits will be posted on the Commission's calendar located at [www.ferc.gov/EventCalendar/EventsList.aspx](http://www.ferc.gov/EventCalendar/EventsList.aspx) along with other related information.

DATED: August 3, 2015

Nathaniel J. Davis, Sr.,  
Deputy Secretary.

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